Objections to Real Democracy

Well, really we mean objections to the optimised form of random selection democracy that is being promoted by the Real Democracy Party (and which we call 'realdem' for short).

The best way to understand the ideas of the Real Democracy Party is to study such other documents as *The Basics of the RDP,* or the book by Robin P Clarke titled *The Future is Here!*. In the process you should find that objections are usually based on a misunderstanding of what those ideas are anyway. But it may also be useful to have this collection of answers to the principal doubts raised. Meanwhile, some people have an infinite capacity for wilful misunderstandings and finding imaginary faults in any scheme, and so it is impossible to answer all the conceivable objections here.

An immovable tyranny?

Could the absence of elections create a risk of producing a tyranny which could not be removed? Quite the contrary. In reality just about any mass-electoral system is infinitely worse in this respect. Firstly, the realdem system is about the least likely that could be imagined to develop a tyrannical attitude. All the existing governance systems involve a strongly competitive element which leads inevitably to dominance by the most domineering. Secondly, we already have the situation where mass elections lead to electoral powerlessness, where only the candidates of the criminalocracy get a significant hearing.

It might nevertheless be thought that there could be some "Achilles heel" in the system, and indeed the procedure for modifying or adjusting the system could potentially be one. For this reason we will have a carefully-designed Real Democracy Commission to safeguard against this possibility, as explained elsewhere.

Would the RMPs be competent enough?

Would the RMPs, drawn at random from all sections of the electorate, be competent to deal with the complex matters currently flowing through Westminster? Would they be hopelessly outwitted by the superior knowledge and cunning of the professional bureaucrats and interest group lobbyists?

At first consideration, there might seem to be grounds for concern on this point. It might be thought desirable to supplement the random selection with some additional members to be selected by tests of judgement, expertise, knowledge, intelligence and so on. But though such options do remain available to us, we consider it very unlikely that they would be necessary, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, most of the people who lack interest in or aptitude for political/intellectual matters will simply opt out of the bother of becoming RMPs. Uninterested people will de-select by definition. And un-intellectual people rarely choose to make exhibitions of their inadequacies. Of course there are a proportion who greatly lack insight into their own incompetence. But they will be outnumbered by the others. In any population there will be a few highly-driven fanatics and a few Hitler-types. Random selection greatly reduces the probability of such abnormal persons being selected (while also preventing the dominance by excessive conformity which electioneering favours).

While there will doubtless be some individuals inclined to be disruptive or otherwise problematic, they can easily be restrained or excluded as necessary.

Experience in several countries with policy juries ("citizens' juries") or peoples' forums shows that when allowed some significant involvement in issues, even ordinary people can move from their superficial opinions towards viewpoints far less primitive than advanced by professional politicians.

And unlike with the British jury system, the RMPs will not be locked in a room and left to proceed unaided. They will be far from lacking in expert advisors. At worst they will have the same advisors as ministers have now. They will be further guided by

revitalised open debate in the media, internet and the community generally. The politicians will no longer be slaves to hidden agendas, and so they will be more receptive to input from the people in general.

The realdem RMPs will be working under very different conditions from the current politicians. They will not be constantly having to guess what their party machine would think of their actions, and they will not have to calculate how they would look to the electorate, and so they can concentrate on simply making the best decisions.

They will not need to be subject to excessive unpredictable reshuffling. They can be given time, and pre-induction time, during which they can concentrate on developing specific expertise, unlike the current ephemeral, hyperactive ministers.

We are not proposing random selection directly to ministerial posts. Instead such posts can be filled via the emergence – as in any group of diverse individuals – of more talented, knowledgeable, skilled, and or energetic persons. Their positions can be ratified by the traditional process of nomination and election – the flaws of mass elections do not apply to non-mass elections!

More generally, the discussions will be led by the more competent members; we are not proposing some rigid system enforcing equality of contribution of all members.

There is a wealth of great ideas and expertise and understanding in our society, such as in respect of science, economics, environment, and management. The only reason these great ideas have not been implemented is that they have been blocked by the worse-than-useless "leaders" in the electioneered and bribe-whipped parliament.

Under mass elections, we already have a worst situation in which the most casual, uninformed and misinformed sector of public opinion plays a key role. And this most superficial layer of public opinion is carefully manipulated through the media for the antisocial purposes of big business.

At the same time, the most talented people – such as the creators of technological advance – are completely excluded.

Evidence of the great incompetence of mass-elected ministers preoccupied with domineering is hardly difficult to find. We are unlikely to achieve a system that manages worse than the Munich Agreement, the poll tax, railways privatisation, BSE, Churchill causing the second world war by ignoring the advice of Keynes about reparations (*The Economic Consequences of Mr Churchill*),..… . Could the most talented of a random-voluntary 651 *really* be more incompetent than that lot?

The existing systems of mass elections and parties are heading rapidly towards collapse due to corruption, declining credibility and accumulation of outsider opposition. It is only a matter of years before they are replaced by something else. It is inconceivable that any outcome resulting from letting current trends mindlessly take their course would give greater competence or acceptability than the carefully planned introduction of realdem.

From the combination of all the above it should be apparent that far from there being a problem of lack of competence under realdem, it is very likely that there will instead be a great enhancement relative to mass-electoral systems. The option of adding tests of ability/education/etc is very unlikely to be needed (or worthwhile).

Rule by rabble

Some people fear that real democracy would mean rule by an uncultured rabble, and the driving-out of cultural excellence. To which it must first be pointed out that excellence has been substantially driven out of much of our culture already! If anything, by reversing the decadence process, and getting rid of the current dominance by crude electioneering, realdem will reinstate the excellence which has been lost from so many fields.

Oppression of minorities or elites?

Some people feel threatened by a concept of majority rule, because they see themselves as members of a minority (or elite) which they suppose would inevitably become oppressed by a majority to which they do not belong.

In respect of realdem, such fears are entirely misplaced. A look at history and geography shows us that minorities and elites have regularly been tolerated over long periods of time. Intolerance only occurs in exceptional circumstances where there is a lack of an agreed political system with generally-accepted legitimacy, but instead a dictatorship or other anti-democratic situation in which force dominates over organised discussion. That is, the exact opposite of what realdem would provide. Thus realdem would be the least threatening to minorities.

The reason for such tolerance lies in the fact that just about every one of us are members of some minority or other. And even fewer do not have friends or relatives who are not in one or other minority. It follows from that reality that everyone finds it in their interests to support a general concept of tolerance of minorities (within reason). Most people appreciate the value of diversity even to the extent of tolerating millionaires (and even admiring millionaire footballers and other "celebrities" as heroes). (And anyone who suffers from greedy *billionaire*itis has the solution to their affliction in their own hands.)

Corruption and RMPs' obligations

Mass electoral systems strongly favour the most self-advancing, pushy, selfishly-ambitious sorts of persons. And such persons also happen to be those most inclined to put in second place the concerns of the wider society, and thus be most inclined to become corrupted.

The party whips system further promotes corruption through its system of bribes for conforming with the party line and penalties for deviating from it. And mass electioneering is also subject to a third factor promoting corruption, in that candidates are incentivised to favour wealthy lobbies, interest groups such as major big biz sectors or public service sectors, and to avoid alienating such groups, because their financial and ideological support in campaigning makes all the difference between winning and losing of elections.

Realdem liberates the government system from all three of these corrupting processes, and could thus be expected to be substantially less corrupted than mass election systems.

Some people might suppose that the "discipline" of having to stand for re-election would weed out corruption, but practical experience does not grant much credibility to such a notion. And that is because elected politicians excel in just one skill, which is that of generating a most convincing appearance of great integrity and benevolence. And there is always a large enough proportion of active voters available to be taken in by those appearances.

One might nevertheless expect that some realdem MPs would become corrupt. However, provided they were not a majority that would not matter, unless of course they had been granted some key powers as a minister. But then again, such ministers could be deterred by the prospect of disgraced dismissal by their uncorrupted (non-minister) colleagues.

Nevertheless, there may be a case for some stricter obligations on those becoming ministers. Various conditions which could be imposed on ministers and or realdem MPs could include: making their personal finances permanently open to inspection by the public indefinitely; and or prohibition from visiting or holding assets in countries hostile to realdem except under strict conditions to prevent abuses. They could be required not to exceed a certain material standard of living, indefinitely. That could be related to the affluence of the selectee at time of selection, so that wealthier selectees would not be deterred by the prospect of losing out. And an effective system for monitoring and deterring violations of any of these rules could be introduced. These anti-corruption measures alone would massively improve the political system, but of course no existing (pre-realdem) government would even consider introducing them!

Finally, don't forget that no one will be forced to become an MP. Anyone who cannot accept reasonable restrictions is probably lacking in commitment to the fair government of this land and not really suitable to be governing us anyway.

Policing of corruption

The existing controls on abuse of public office are laughable. We can make the offence of abuse of public office at any level subject to severe penalties. We can end the system whereby political appointees – Lord Chancellor, Attorney General, DPP – can choose to allow serious corruption to go unchallenged. These posts can be replaced by non-politically-selected means. .

A Spongers' Charter?

There will be regular monitoring of each RMP to ensure that they are attending and participating in governing activity. If they are inactive without good reason, salary payments will be promptly suspended. New RMPs will be required to sign an acceptance that wilful receipt of payments in the absence of activity will be prosecuted as fraud.

Weak, indecisive government?

Some commentators may object that realdem, like "weak" coalition government, will lead to great inefficiency due to too much debating. But without proper debate between all the viewpoints involved, proper decisionmaking cannot be achieved. In time, ongoing debates will either be resolved or – where unconstructive – can be suspended by one means or another. "Strong" government, which bypasses such debate, routinely results in constant streams of poor-quality decisionmaking and legislation imposed on the nation as can be seen all too clearly in the UK. (By the way, the UK's recent ConDem "coalition" government is not really much of a coalition, so much as two flavours of corporate dinosaur party coalescing together for a convenient while.)

Loss of MPs' constituency support work

Under the existing UK system, MPs spend much of their time acting as socio-legal caseworkers for constituents who request help from them. The disappearance of this function would be no great loss. It would make more sense for those people to be

helped by professionals and volunteers properly qualified in such casework, while the MPs concentrate on *their* proper functions of policymaking and decisionmaking. Furthermore, the MPs' casework causes them to develop a distorted image of the electorate's concerns and experiences.

Ancient Athens had it

The Athenian "democracy" was completely different from realdem. Not least it involved mass outdoor meetings of up to 6000 people rather crudely herded in to vote at "Assemblies".

But power no longer resides at national level?

It might also be objected that national governments such as Westminster no longer have much power, so realdem would still be far from in control. There is a fundamental misunderstanding here. The lack of power of national governments is due to the situation explained at the beginning, of governments being controlled by big business via the superficial electioneering process. A realdem government could take back powers to itself.

But can it be introduced?

The Real Democracy Party has been founded to provide a soundly practical means of introducing realdem. The RDP is radically different from all preceding parties in important respects. Firstly, it has merely one policy, of introducing realdem and any necessary accompanying measures. Secondly, its leaders cannot be accused of seeking to promote power for themselves. The whole point of the RDP is to introduce a system that does not have the RDP governing the country! The constitution of the RDP irrevocably commits it to have only this one policy, and to have no views on unrelated matters.

To achieve a majority of Real Democracy Party MPs, or to persuade a significant number of non-realdem MPs to support the changes, might seem dauntingly ambitious. But some very weighty points stand in our favour against the seeming might of the big established parties:

The long-term trend of public opinion already is going our way, with growing dissatisfaction with party politics and with the political system, and we have hardly even started campaigning yet! And this is despite there being no apparent alternative for these dissatisfied souls to turn to.

Both Labs and Cons are riven with disagreement not only about details but about what their very essence and key policies should be. Unlike the realdems, they are obliged to have policies (both pretend and real) about *everything*. This obliges them to be much more cumbersome complex organisations, constantly struggling to compromise between the various competing interests affected by the policies.

Thanks to their complexity of history and policy the Labs and Cons have much more bureaucratic structures, difficult to steer, economically encumbered, and repellent to talented people.

In addition the Labs and Cons are faced with great difficulties in promoting themselves. Firstly because they lack any honest clear definition of their essence and policies, secondly because the public already knows about them and are sick of them and know that they are merely grasping power-seekers, and thirdly because they are not moving from a recent beginning towards a clear goal in the near future, but rather continuing a depressing slog from decades ago to nowhere in particular.

In contrast to these, the Real Democracy Party has one clearly defined policy, addressed to a problem already recognised by a high proportion of the population. It has an end in view to make the party redundant. And is manifestly not a party attempting to secure power to its own personnel.

Spending £50M on advertising cannot compensate for a trashy product. Everyone in the UK knew that the C5 electric car was produced by the wizard Clive Sinclair, but it still flopped. And the public are becoming resistant to manipulation by dishonest propagandising.

In recent decades powerful new promotional techniques have been developed – network marketing, scientific advertising, and the proliferation of personal communication technologies such as home printers, phones, and the internet.   For the various reasons just explained, the Labs and Cons are unable to gain much from these powerful means, but the RDP is. You can probably already see anyway that the established parties are not so much secure mountains as doomed lumbering dinosaurs.

But can we trust the RPD's MPs to introduce it?

Well, you can sure trust the existing parties to break their promises and continue abusing their powers. Meanwhile, the RDP's MP-candidates have just one promise, which is to introduce realdem in the form agreed by the RDP's consultation process up to that time. If on getting a majority (winning a general election) they then failed to keep that promise, then their credibility would be reduced to absolute zero and they would never get elected again; and they would all be in permanent disgrace ever after. Such a prospect can be resolutely ruled out.

"Unproven"

All the above may be reasonable enough, but some doubters may still say that it is all just unproven theory. And that it cannot be justifiable to plunge the nation into such a reckless experiment.

 To some extent this claim of unprovenness is true, but not to a sufficient extent to constitute a valid reason for dumping the realdem revolution.

Firstly, random selection was used with some effectiveness in a system for governing a state, in ancient Athens. We don't have to also copy the associated mistakes of that system of long ago. Secondly, we have the more recent experience of policy juries or planning juries, which are sometimes perversely called "citizens' juries".

Thirdly and most importantly, it is clearly proven that existing systems are utterly unacceptable, and that other alternatives such

as proportional representation, electronic referenda, etc., cannot usefully address the key problems either.

So what is as good as matters proven is that realdem is the most rational, most realistic, most practical choice we have available at present. Given a choice between the not-yet entirely proven and and the thoroughly disproven, the sensible choice is surely obvious.

Opposition to realdem

Naturally, the campaign to introduce realdem is going to have powerful enemies. They will include all of globalised big business along with almost all the world's governments, not least the UK's, and all the other political parties.

The tactics of the opposition could conceivably include violence against our campaign, along with various sorts of dirty tricks, but it seems rather likely that they would be an enormous own goal in the UK context. They could try to knock out or knobble key personnel or assets, but they would not succeed because there would not be any key personnel or assets. By the time they had got round to some Stalinesque mission of elimination, the ideas in this book would be spread around too many people so such suppression could not succeed.

The only other significant issue appears to be propaganda. There will naturally be a great deal of hostility from media owners, and some though not all journalists. Our enemies in the media will at first ignore us, believing that without media publicity we will fail. Then when they see that we are growing anyway, they will start to misrepresent us. Much space will be given to distorted accounts of our policies, biased discussions of them, and malicious slanders against our personnel (life is so hard to predict isn't it!). Well, frankly, I'm laughing as I write this, because try as they might, the more they try the more they will raise suspicion in their readers' minds as to what is really going on. Bad publicity will be good publicity, mark my words. Of course some people will be taken in but not too many.

While all this is going on in the media, we will be concentrating on getting our message across without their distorting lens, by the direct communication of the networking.

Victory will be ours!

RDP (Birmingham Branch),
115 Salisbury Tower, Birmingham B18 7DB
0121 456 4274   objections[at]realdem.co
www.realdem.co

The Real Democracy Party – *The future is here!*